(e) whether sufficient number of scientists and facilities have been provided in the centre for carrying out research activities; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre facilities at Mahendragiri (near Kavalkinar) cater to assembly and testing of liquid propulsion systems for ISRO launch vehicles.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The facilities at Liquid Propulsion System Centre, Mahendragiri cater to Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Projects. It will also meet requirements for GSLV-Mark-III approved recently.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Centre has been provided with 180 Scientists/ Engineers, besides 170 support staff under scientific & technical category. Necessary infrastructure such as, assembly, integration, instrumentation and testing facilities as well as logistic support including housing have been provided in the Centre.

Launch of 'GRAMSAT'

2490. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to develop and launch a satellite 'GRAMSAT' to facilitate village level soil profiling, crop study, water level monitoring etc.;

(b) if so, the likely date of developing and launching thereof; and

(c) the cost projections and other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) A concept of GRAMSAT satellite is under consideration. The time-frame, configuration and other details are being studied. The proposed "GRAMSAT" Programme will have satellite-based communication network for developmental communication and training. Village level soil profiling, crop study, water level monitoring etc., are done utilising the IRS series of satellites.